

# COVID-19 Guidance for Elections Personnel

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Best practices and information collected from the CDC and  
other federal and state government agencies  
Compiled by the Indiana Election Division



## General Good Hygiene Practices

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- Lather hands with soap for 20 seconds, scrubbing all hand surfaces including back of hand, backs of fingers, in between fingers, and side of palm opposite thumb. Rinse for 10 seconds in warm water.
- Cough into your elbow, a sleeve, or a tissue/handkerchief
  - Wash hands after coughing or blowing your nose
- Clean/disinfect all frequently touched surfaces on a regular schedule
  - At least once per day
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
  - EPA approved disinfectants:
    - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Make sure bathrooms have plenty of supplies (soap, paper towels, etc.)
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when hand washing is not possible

### Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

## Masks, Face Coverings, and Face Shields

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- Use cloth face coverings or face masks when in public areas (polling location, ABS central count location, etc.) or when working in the same area as other people
- Do not touch the mask or your face while wearing
  - Continue to maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and others
- If no masks are available, a cloth face covering may be used
  - Cloth face coverings should:
    - Fit snugly
    - Have ear loops or ties to go around head
    - Have at least 2 layers of fabric
    - Not restrict breathing
    - Be washable and able to be dried in a machine without damage
    - Be washed in between uses
    - Be tightly woven cotton, if at all possible

- Face shields may be used with cloth face coverings but are not necessary for use with masks: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>
- Removing Face Masks
  - Remove masks without touching the front of the mask
  - Grasp the elastic over the ears or the ties behind the head
  - Use elastic or ties to remove the mask

## Resources:

- Cloth Masks & DIY Cloth Mask Instructions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Cloth face covering FAQ: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html>

## Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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- **Putting On**
  - Put on mask first; adjust to fit snugly over nose and around mouth
  - If using goggles or a face shield, put on and adjust to fit comfortably
  - Put on gloves after all other PPE, as you would normally put on gloves
- **Removing Gloves**
  - Remove gloves by grasping palm of one glove in other hand and pulling off, then balling up in that hand.
  - Slip the fingers of the now-ungloved hand into the glove on the other hand at the wrist.
  - Pull off glove from the wrist, allowing it to turn inside out so that contaminated surfaces cannot be touched.
  - Dispose of gloves in trash.
    - If your hands touch the outside of the gloves, wash your hands before proceeding.
- **Removing Goggles or Face Shield**
  - Remove by lifting ear pieces or band at back of head.
  - If reusable, set in a designated area to be cleaned.
  - If your hands touch the front of the goggles or face shield, wash your hands before proceeding.
- **Removing Face Masks or Cloth Face Coverings**
  - Remove mask over trash, by grasping ties or elastic around ears.
  - Avoid touching front of mask.
  - Move mask slowly and place in trash immediately to avoid scattering germs in air.

# Wash hands immediately and thoroughly after removing all PPE

## Election Specific Tasks

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### **ABS-Mail: Special Handling Procedures for COVID 19**

Create a hand-washing regimen for your employees.

- Ensure employees have access to wash stations and are washing their hands for at least 20-seconds using hand soap and are doing so at regular intervals.
- Provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol in its base to employees for use when washing hands may not always be an option.
- Post “how-to” hand washing flyers at hand washing stations (see appendix).
- Contact your voting systems vendor to determine what, if any, impact there may be handling optical scan ballot cards if hands are wet from hand-washing or using hand sanitizer.

Use gloves, letter openers, or finger cots to open and process mail, when possible. Good hand and face hygiene are still crucial, however!

Avoid touching your face at all times when processing mail. Alternatively, counties may provide face masks to staff who open and process mail.

Cover coughs and sneezes, and immediately dispose of tissue and wash hands following best practices guidelines.

Ask the public not to lick envelopes to avoid the transmission of an illness, out of an abundance of caution. However, paper and licked envelopes are not high-risk transmission vectors

When possible, purchase outer and inner security envelopes with self-stick adhesive or use a wet sponge (or equivalent) when sealing envelopes to mail absentee ballot and materials to voters.

No additional precautions are currently recommended by the CDC for storage of ballots

### **Resources:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html>

(scroll to the bottom of the page)

### **ABS-Travel Board: Special Considerations for COVID 19**

IEC Order 2020-37 set forth special procedures to better assist individuals who are not able to personally mark their own ballot and need assistance from bi-partisan absentee voter board teams, including:

- Allowing staff in in-patient or rehab health facilities to assist voters within their care, providing that two staff are present when assisting the voter or completing the voter's ballot at their request, and the ballot is delivered and returned by a bi-partisan team or other delivery method approved by the county election board;
- Allowing bi-partisan absentee voter board teams to assist voters who request travel board support to tele- or video-conference with the voter;
- Expanding the definition of a voter with disability to include individuals who are temporarily unable to leave their home due to concerns of COVID-19 so that a travel board team can stand outside of a door or other screen to communicate with a voter inside their home or health care facility, and sign the voter's name to the security envelope and mark the proper box on the affidavit found on the absentee security envelope.

Ensure absentee voter boards have cloth face masks, gloves or finger cots, hand sanitizer, and wipes to disinfect materials that may come in contact with the voter.

Avoid touching face, even when using gloves or finger cots

Schedule mutually agreeable appointments that allow for absentee voter boards to follow proper hygiene protocols

- Allow for time in the travel board team's schedule for restroom breaks to follow proper hand washing procedures

If using a direct record electronic voting system, ensure the voting system and any peripheral is disinfected as recommended by the voting system vendor

- Use a stylus or other device to press buttons; more information found in the voting system section of this document

### **ABS Central Count on Election Day: Special Considerations for COVID 19**

Ensure county has washrooms available for staff and members of the public, and those washrooms are stocked with plenty of hand soap and towels to dry hands.

Instruct central count teams (and members of the public that may be present) to:

- follow a strict hand-washing regimen,
- avoid touching their face,
- cough or sneeze into tissue or arm and immediately through tissue away and wash hands,
- use a cloth face covering (unless health officials have discouraged the practice at the time of the event), and
- follow procedures to remove and discard any additional PPE used.

If possible, provide gloves or finger cots to central count team members when handling absentee balloting materials

Sanitize surfaces on regular intervals.

Sanitize voting systems that may be used during central count, following recommendations from voting system vendors

Ensure proper social distancing between central count teams

- For example, use a 6' table and place individuals at the head of each table and pass materials back and forth when following absentee review procedures

Post information about proper hand-washing protocols at hand washing stations

If necessary, mark 6' intervals in any area that may require individuals to line up to gather or return materials

## **In-Person Voting: Special Considerations for COVID 19**

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### **General Guidelines:**

- Ensure poll workers and voters have access to hand-washing stations
  - Poll workers should follow strict hand washing regimen and avoid touching face.
- Sanitize surfaces often using disinfectants recommended by the EPA or local health officials.
- Sanitize voting systems using procedures recommended by your voting system vendor
- When possible, poll workers and voters should use gloves or finger cots.
  - Confirm with your voting system vendor if voters or poll workers can interact with voting equipment or ePollbooks with gloves or finger cots on.
  - Always wash hands after removing gloves or finger cots.
- Whether a poll worker or voter using gloves or finger cots, avoid touching your face
- Cloth face coverings are currently encouraged by public health officials. Consult with current Center for Disease Control or state/local health department guidelines to determine if using face masks continue to be encouraged.

### **Pre-Planning for In Person Voting:**

- Evaluate your in-person absentee and Election Day polling locations and relocate those sites that may be at a location where vulnerable populations might interact with voters, such as a nursing home or senior center.
- Poll workers will also need to keep their distance away from voters and each other. Counties may need to secure additional resources like tables or privacy screens to ensure proper protocols.
- Voting stations should be placed at least 3' from each other, if possible, and privacy screens used when practicable.
- Election materials are often placed in large envelopes. If possible, consider purchasing self-adhesive envelopes. Alternatively, some items may be able to be stored in "Ziploc"-like bags and sealed with a labeled initialed by a bi-partisan team.
- Determine how many bathroom/washroom facilities are available to poll workers and voters. If necessary, consider renting portable wash stations for election day.

- Consider how notice can be posted to ensure proper suggested social distancing requirements. For example, a person's arm to nose is about 3', generally, so suggest voters queue up and stand at a distance at least one full arm's length away.

### **Voting System Use & Disinfecting:**

- All voting systems and ePollbooks should be cleaned and sanitized according to the voting system vendor's requirements.
- If possible, use a stylus for the voter to press buttons on a DRE machine or ballot marking device. Talk to your voting system vendor about which styluses are recommended and if an alternative, like using the eraser end of a wooden pencil that the voter could keep, would work. Alternatively, finger cots may be a solution for absentee voter board members, staff, and voters to use to touch a voting screen, button, or ePollbook. Please check with your vendor to confirm a prophylactic like the finger cot is compatible for use with your system or for voters to sign their name.
- Sanitize a stylus used for DRE, ballot marking devices, or ePollbook as recommended by your voting system vendor. The stylus should be cleaned between uses unless there is a disposable sanitary option to place around it and disposed once a voter is done with it.
- For optical scan ballot cards and absentee applications, purchase extra ink pens and ask the voter to hold onto their pen for the duration of the visit and either take it with them as they leave or determine the best way to sanitize the item (or dispose of or recycle it).
- If possible, wipe down surfaces between each person who has contact with those surfaces
  - With ePollbooks, could have single use styluses or clean the styluses between each use
  - Eliminates need for people to touch ePollbooks directly and thus reduces need to wipe ePollbooks with cleaners
- When possible, purchase envelopes with self-stick adhesive or use a wet sponge (or equivalent) when sealing envelopes to secure voted absentee ballots.

### **Poll Workers & Training:**

- Recruit workers from lower risk populations (under 60, low risk based on medical condition, etc.)
- If anyone is sick or feels sick, please ask them to contact the county election board team immediately.
  - On Election Day, it is particularly important to have people call well in advance of the "arrive at 5:00 AM" so that the CEB can triage the situation.
  - Identify back-up poll workers and have them on-site with the election board to dispatch on election day, if possible.
- Set a schedule for in-person absentee and Election Day poll workers to take breaks to regularly wash their hands for at least 20-seconds using hand soap and thoroughly dry them.
  - If possible, make hand sanitizer available to everyone.

- Counties are encouraged to contact their voting systems vendor to determine what, if any, impact there may be handling optical scan ballot cards if hands are wet from hand-washing or using hand sanitizer.
- Determine best way to conduct poll worker training.
  - If training sessions are generally conducted in large groups, please consider offering multiple training sessions to keep group numbers to a minimum.
  - Virtual training classes may be a possibility depending on the work assignments.
    - There are several free online conference options available, if your county does not currently subscribe to such a service, and many are compatible with a smartphone if a computer is not available to the worker.
    - While not all workers will have a computer or internet access, a virtual training class may be helpful in some circumstances.
  - Consider developing material packets that can be mailed to workers ahead of their scheduled start date might also be necessary, if in-person or virtual training is not possible.
- Educate workers on need for good hygiene practices, use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Emphasize a person should not work if they feel ill or have a temperature.

### **Line & Site Management:**

- Manage lines so there are 6 feet between people
  - Consider using visual aids such as cones or painter's tape indoors
  - Outside, duct tape or sidewalk chalk could also be used
- Limit the number of people inside the voting location at a time
  - May limit based on the number of square feet in the location – 15 square feet per voter allows for 7.5 feet on each side of the voter, for instance
  - If the location has 225 square feet, 15 square feet per person would allow for 15 people to be inside at a time
    - Can then use a one person in, one person out approach to maintain limit
- If possible, consider setting up a one-way flow with one door as an entrance and one door as an exit
  - If not possible, ensure that the first spot in the line outside the door is 6 feet from the door so that voters can exit while maintaining a safe distance from others
- Set up equipment to allow enough distance between people
  - At least 6 feet between pollbooks or ePollbooks
  - At least 6 feet between voting machines or voting booths, using a privacy screen
  - At least 6 feet between optical scan ballot tabulators
- Manage interactions to maintain distance between workers and public



- If voters and workers both must handle something, ask workers to step back 6 feet while voters are handling it, and ask voter to step back before worker approaches again
- Place hand sanitizer at strategic locations for public to use before reaching workers
- Place posters with CDC guidance around polling place – LINK:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- Social Distancing Recommendations
  - Limit nonessential visitors. For example, poll workers should be encouraged not to bring children, grandchildren, etc. with them as they work the polls.
  - Remind voters upon arrival to try to leave space between themselves and others. Encourage voters to stay 6 feet apart if feasible. Polling places may provide signs to help voters and workers remember this.
  - Discourage voters and workers from greeting others with physical contact (e.g., handshakes). Include this reminder on signs about social distancing.

**Resources:**

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html>

Indiana State Department of Health: [https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_ElectionPollingStations03.20.20.pdf](https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN_COVID-19_ElectionPollingStations03.20.20.pdf)

# Election Equipment Disinfectant Procedures

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Surfaces should be sanitized frequently, preferably between each voter during in-person absentee or Election Day voting

Voting systems should be disinfected as recommended by county's voting system vendor. Please see Appendix for information gathered by VSTOP.

## Additional Links

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CDC, Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

CDC, Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

CDC, Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>

CDC, How to Protect Yourself and Others

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

CDC, Handwashing Guidelines

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

CDC recommendations for polling locations, election staff, poll workers, and absentee workers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html>

EAC guidance including cleaning guidelines from major election equipment vendors

<https://www.eac.gov/election-officials/coronavirus-covid-19-resources>

Indiana State Department of Health recommendations for poll locations and workers

[https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN\\_COVID-19\\_ElectionPollingStations03.20.20.pdf](https://coronavirus.in.gov/files/IN_COVID-19_ElectionPollingStations03.20.20.pdf)

The federal government's main page for COVID-19 facts and information

[coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CDC, What You Need to Know

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

CDC, Mitigating Community Spread

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>

FEMA COVID-19 Resources

<https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus>

FDA Action Page, including status of procuring more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/counterterrorism-and-emerging-threats/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Department of Labor and OSHA Workplace Safety

<https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus>

Department of Labor COVID-19 Employee rights and requirements

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>

EPA, Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

OSHA Publications

<https://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.html>

CDC, DIY Cloth Face Coverings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

CDC, Cloth Face Covering FAQs

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html>

CDC, PPE Strategy for Health Care Professionals

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>

CDC COVID-19 Factsheets and Posters

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>